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Approved For Release 2003/10/15 : CIA-RDP79T00975A001000140001-4

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SOVIET UNION

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NEAR EAST - AFRICA

25X1

4. Libyan King reportedly favors alliance with Egypt rather than West (page 4).
5. Greece again seeks participation in MEDO to protect interests in Cyprus (page 5).

WESTERN EUROPE

6. Comment on arrest of East German Foreign Minister (page 5).

25X6

25X1A

Approved For Release 2003/10/15 : CIA-RDP79T00975A001000140001-4

25X1

Approved For Release 2003/10/15 : CIA-RDP79T00975A001000140001-4

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NEAR EAST - AFRICA

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4. Libyan King reportedly favors alliance with Egypt rather than West:

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According to French Minister Dumarcay in Tripoli, King Idris of Libya recently instructed his Prime Minister to drop negotiations with the Western powers in favor of an immediate alliance with Egypt. Dumarcay told the American Minister he believed King Idris had come under Egyptian influence during his prolonged visit to Cairo.

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Comment: British Minister Kirkbride reported that the Prime Minister threatened to resign on 10 January following a request from Idris to negotiate a treaty with Egypt.

An Egyptian-Libyan alliance at this time would further delay and complicate negotiations between Libya and the Western powers for military bases.

5. Greece again seeks participation in MEDO to protect interests in Cyprus:

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Greek Prime Minister Papagos recently told Ambassador Peurifoy that he was disturbed over reports that a Middle East defense planning board will be established at Cyprus. He insisted that if this takes place without Greek representation, his government will be placed in an embarrassing position and the opposition will make it a major issue.

Papagos also stated that the participation of even one Greek officer as an observer or liaison representative would offset the criticism of the opposition.

Comment: The Greek Government has previously tried unsuccessfully to obtain full membership in the proposed Middle East defense organization. This is the first suggestion that Greece might be satisfied with anything less.

WESTERN EUROPE

6. Comment on arrest of East German Foreign Minister:

There is no evidence that the arrest of the East German Foreign Minister, Georg Dertinger, will have

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any important effect on East German relations with either Western Germany or the Soviet Orbit. His removal, however, is in line with the current reduction of non-Communist representation in the East German Government, which reflects present emphasis upon the rapid communization of East Germany.

Dertinger, a member of the East Zone Christian Democratic Union, has exercised little influence on the conduct of affairs in the Foreign Ministry. His Communist deputy has been the real authority, and his own activities have been subjected to constant surveillance.

The defection last year of Dertinger's press secretary, Gerold Rummler, may prove to be the primary basis of the charges now levelled against him, and his arrest will provide ample reason for the elimination of any other officials who may be considered part of his entourage.

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